

Death of Mr. James Wilkerson

AN OLD COLONIST DEPARTED.

Very deep and general regret was felt throughout Northam and district, when it became known on Sunday last that another of the pioneers, in the person of Mr. James Wilkerson, had passed away. Since the death of Mr. Joseph Lockyer, Mr. Wilkerson—who was in his 8th year—had been regarded as the oldest resident of the Northam district. Up to nearly the end of last year Mr. Wilkerson enjoyed good health for one of his advanced age and though frail of body his mental vigor was quite unimpaired. About four months ago he became seriously ill and since then he had been confined to his home in Duke Street, where he had been under the constant attention of Dr. Rockett. From the first it was felt that the old gentleman had little chance of recovery and although from time to time he rallied wonderfully the end was not unexpected. He passed peacefully away at midnight on Saturday.

The funeral took place on Monday and the large and representative attendance formed an eloquent tribute to the esteem in which the deceased was held. The place of interment was the beautifully situated little church at Katrine, which the late Mr. Wilkerson in conjunction with the late Mr. John Taylor Coote and the late Mr. Abraham Morgan had provided the funds to build in 1862—over half a century ago. The land for the Church was presented by the late Dr. Viverash of the Swan. The cortege left Mr. Wilkerson's home in Duke Street, at 10.30 and proceeded to Katrine by way of the upper Newcastle Road which passes much of the property that had been pioneered by the deceased gentleman. On one side of the road is the majestic grove of olive trees planted by Mr. Wilkerson on the site of his first Northam home, and on the other, the quaint two storey house with many windows to the ground floor in which

windows to the ground floor in which he spent the greater portion of his life until he came to reside in Northam three years ago. In addition to the large numbers who followed the remains from Northam, many old residents of Toodyay and Wooramin came across to attend the ceremony at Katrine, with the result that the little church was filled to overflowing, some of the congregation having to be accommodated with seats in the porch. Perhaps never before has there been gathered together a company of men so strikingly representative of the old or as orations of the district.

The funeral service was conducted by the Rector of Northam, the Rev. A. L. Marshall. Sprung from the text "Blessed are they that die in the Lord even so saith the spirit, for they rest from their labours and their works may follow them," he said it was not always that they could pronounce those words with the same confidence and assurance as over the remains of their late brother. He was a man of simple faith—a man whose religion was his guide in life. Many years ago, when still a young man, he had shown his faith in his religion by building—with two other men—a church—that Church to the Glory of God. The same faith had upheld him through out his life and in his closing days he had drawn comfort from the holy sacrament. Of late the desire of the brother had been for that rest he had so nobly earned. His works would follow him in the example of his life. There was as much wisdom in the world as folly, but the wisdom of man was foolishness before the Lord, and there was far too little of that simple faith which had been the leading feature of his life. Now that he had passed away the example of his life was still with them as a sure guide to follow.

The remains of the deceased were laid to rest by the side of his late wife, who died in 1903, and close to the grave of his eldest son and other members of his family. The family of the late Mr. Wilkerson consisted of three sons and two daughters. Of the sons the late

two daughters. Of the sons the two eldest ones—Messrs Charles and Samuel Wilkerson are dead, and the third Mr. George T. Wilkerson is a well-known Northam farmer and a member of the Northam Road Board. The two daughters are Mrs. Richard Smith, of Guildford Road, and Mrs Tom Sinclair of Northam. There are also living 28 grand children and 38 great-grandchildren.

The chief mourners were Mr. G. T. Wilkerson (son) and Messrs R. Smith, and T. Sinclair (sons-in-law).

The pall-bearers were:—The Mayor, (Mr. O. L. Bernard) Messrs J. M. Carroll (Chairman Northam Road Board) Dr. Rockett, Messrs H. W. Hancock, J. French and W. J. Morgan.

Wreaths were sent by the following:

George T. and Eliza Ann (son and daughter-in-law),

Melinda and Thomas (daughter and son-in-law) Maria and Richard (daughter and son-in-law) Mrs. J. Friend and family, Mr. and Mrs. Chidlow and Mrs Campbell Mr. and Mrs. S. Purser, Mr and Mrs W. L. Wilkerson and family (Dunagoe N.S.W.; Grandchildren Oakfields, Wangan Hills, Toodyay, Glenavon, Ego-line, Chidlow's Well, Northam, Brookton, Clackline, Fremantle, Mrs. C. Wilkerson (daughter-in-law), John, James and Sam, Mr. and Mrs. James Byfield, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Byfield, Mr. and Mrs. O. L. Bernard, Members of the Northam Club, Mr and Mrs. John and family, Mr. and Mrs. A. Friend and family, Mr. E. G. Rosevear, Eliza, Howard and Boys, Mary Ann, E. Alfred Eaton, Fred Grace and family, Mrs. Howard, Mr. and Mrs Stremple, Mr. and Mrs Byfield Mrs. Jessop and family, Mr. and Mrs H Morrell and Family Mrs Vivensh and daughters, Mrs. Withnell sen., Mr. and Mrs. H. Withnell, Chairman and members of the Northam Road Board, Mr. and Mrs. W. Mears and family, Aunt Alice and Little Jackie, George and and Mrs. H. G. Monger Mr. and Mrs. White, Mr. and Mrs. W. Nottage and family, Mrs C. S. Monger and family Dr. and Mrs. Rockett, Mrs. Lockyer, Mrs. Fraser Alex and Lydia, Mr. and

Mrs. Fraser Alex and Lydia, Mr. and W. J. Morgan and family, Mr. and Mrs. C. M. McDermott, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. McDermott, all at "Glen Avon" Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Stewart and family, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Vivensh.

The late Mr. James Wilkerson was born in Norfolk, England, in the year 1827. In 1849, when twenty-two years of age, he came to Western Australia in the ship "Shopleve" and went to live on the Swan. He remained there for two years and whilst there married Miss Jane Farmer. She was born at the Canning in the year 1831 and died at Northam in 1904. Mr. and Mrs. Wilkerson came over the

hills in 1851, Mr. Wilkerson having been appointed manager of Katrine for Tr. Vivensh of the Swan. He remained there for ten years and then sold "Glenavon" farm from the late Mr. Farwell. This property he subsequently bought. Thirty-eight years ago he purchased "Ego-line" from Mr. Sewell and he made his home there until three years ago. In 1884 he purchased the Oakfield farm on which Mr. G. T. Wilkerson now resides and more recently the Log Laddock farm on the Newcastle Road near Northam. In addition to the pioneering work he did in the districts, Mr. Wilkerson took part in the development of the North West. He was in partnership with the late Dr. Vivensh and the late Mr. Middleton in station property in the North and in 1865 and 1866 he spent eighteen months there. In 1867 he was one of an exploring party of four, of whom the others were the late Mr. E. T. Holyoake, the late Mr. Morston Craig, and the late Mr. S. W. Vivensh, who started from Toodyay in search of an overland route to the North West. On reaching Shark's Bay they found that the vessel which should have been there with provisions to carry them thence had not arrived. Consequently they had to make their way back. All but three of their horses died and they suffered acute hardship. In 1879 Mr. Wilkerson again spent five months in

Wilkinson again spent five months in the North-West—after which his second son—the late Charles Henry Wilkinson—managed the property for 7 years until Mr Wilkinson disposed of his interest to Mr. S. H. Vircash. In addition to his large agricultural and pastoral interests Mr. Wilkinson acquired a good deal of Northampton property and showed his confidence in the town by erecting several substantial houses. The deceased gentleman always took a lively interest in public affairs, and when the first Road Board Act was passed he became a member of the first Northampton Road Board. He remained on the Board for 27 years, and was Chairman for much of that time succeeding the late Mr. William Dempster, and handing over the chair to Mr. David Morrell. He was a man of most genial quiet and charitable disposition, a recognised authority on all matters relating to stock and farm operations and a great worker.